EXCLUSIVES

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Maximizing the Article

In early 1967, Senator Robert Kennedy began work on what was to have been a New York Times Magazine article based on his 1962 Cuban-missile-crisis notes. The Senator's outline called for a piece of about 5,000 words for which he would have received a standard $400 fee. But by the time the work was finished about a year ago, it was five times its intended length and, in the Senator's view, might have appeared too politically self-serving in a pre-election year. So he put it away and never collected his $400.

Last week all rights to the 25,000-word manuscript were sold to the McCall Corp. The initial payment was $1,000,000, probably the highest figure ever for a piece of its length. Depending on the bidding for book rights, the final figure could be even higher.

McCall Corp.'s Editor in Chief Norman Cousins promised that the article in the November *McCall's* would contain never published information on "the thinking and feelings at that time of the President and Attorney General, the estimates and reports of the CIA." In addition, it would tell of Security Council deliberations and "the significant secret meetings between the Attorney General and Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin." Other editors who had seen the manuscript emphasized other virtues. "The thing that comes across," said one, "is the terribly close relationship between the two Kennedy brothers. It's not as great for what it tells you as for who is saying it and the relationship it describes."

Ted Sorensen, who represented the estate in the negotiations and did "very minor editing," insisted that all of the actual writing was the work of the late Senator. Asked why the Kennedy family had consented to the sale and its attendant publicity, Sorensen said that the executors (Mrs. Ethel Kennedy, Senator Edward Kennedy and Mrs. Pat Kennedy Lawford) "are required by law to maximize the estate, particularly when there are eleven minor children."